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Council Chambers,
GOSFORTH.
August, 1944.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Gosforth Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

In accordance with the Ministry of Health Circular No. 10/44 I beg to submit a very brief interim report on the health of the District during the year 1943; as usual some details of the sanitary circumstances of the area are given in the Senior Sanitary Inspector's Report which is presented herewith.

The official statistics furnished by the Registrar-General are used throughout the report; in all cases, where numbers are stated, the comparative figures for 1942 will be inserted in brackets.

POPULATION.

The estimated civilian population at mid year 1943 was 20,090 (20,380) - a further decrease.

BIRTHS.

331 (294) live births and 7 (12) still births were registered during the year; the birth rate was 16.4 (14.4) compared with 16.5 (15.8) for England and Wales.

There was one (0) maternal death - the patient died at Wallsend.

INFANT MORTALITY.

8 (4) deaths of infants under one year of age were reported giving a rate of 24.1 (13.6) per thousand live births; the corresponding figure for England and Wales was 49 (49).

DEATHS.

There were 215 (193) deaths from all causes at all ages; the death rate was 10.7 (9.47) per thousand per annum against a rate of 12.1 (11.6) for England and Wales.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

Apart from tuberculosis 504 (663) notifications were received- the vast majority were in respect of minor illnesses such as Measles, Whooping Cough and Chickenpox; only four cases of Dysentery were reported compared with 82 in 1942.

58 (23) cases of Scarlet Fever (one non-civilian) and 5 (10) cases of Diphtheria were notified during the year - none of the notified cases of Diphtheria had been immunised.

During the year 30 (620) children were immunised by General Practitioners and 294 (289) at the Welfare Centre - a total of 324; included in this total are 38 children residing outside the District who attend the Welfare Centre.

7 (6) deaths were attributed to Pneumonia but none to Cerebro-spinal Fever, Scarlet Fever, Whooping Cough or Measles; one temporary resident, a child of 16 months who had not been immunised died of Diphtheria in Walker Gate Hospital.

TUBERCULOSIS.

25 (22) new cases of Tuberculosis were notified and there were 2 'transfers' from other districts and two old cases were returned to the register; 14 (6) deaths occurred.

Pulmonary Tuberculosis (Consumption) accounted for 16 of the 25 new notifications and 12 of the 14 deaths.

The total number of 'live' cases on the register at the end of the year was 118 (101) - of these 83 (73) were pulmonary and 35 (28) non-pulmonary.

CHILD WELFARE.

1586 (1918) domiciliary visits were paid by the Health Visitors and 148 (146) Child Welfare Sessions were held at the centre at which the total number of attendances was 8797 (8016) by 1080 (1023) individuals of whom 343 (364) were 'new' children; in addition 876 (1123) special interviews were granted to parents at the office and 809 simple dressings were applied.

Apart from the 148 Child Welfare Sessions, 23 Special Immunisation Sessions were held at which 575 Anti-diphtheria injections were administered to 294 children and 59 Ultra-Violet sessions at which 828 exposures were given to 25 children.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION. (Children and Young Persons Act, 1932 - Part 5.)

The Health Visitor is the Inspector under this Act; there were no children on the register at the end of the year.

ANTE-NATAL AND POST-NATAL CLINICS.

106 (104) sessions were held at the Centre at which a total of 960 (903) attendances were registered; of these 235 (169) were Ante-natal first visits and 90 (106) Post-natal first visits. 51 out of the 286 Expectant Mothers on the register were non-residents of Gosforth.

DENTAL CLINIC.

This clinic has now been established 12 years. During the year 27 (26) sessions were held and 57 (63) children had general anaesthetics administered for multiple extractions and minor operative procedures. The total of attendances was 177 (209) and this included a number of Ante-natal patients who received treatment for the relief of pain or general oral sepsis.

SCABIES.

The improvised cleansing centre at the Sanderson Hospital First Aid Post continued to prove of great value. 1203 treatments were administered to 369 individuals with satisfactory results; in addition 433 sets of bedding, etc, were sterilised and 56 visits of enquiry and advice were paid to the houses of the sufferers.

REMARKS.

A review of the statistics shows that the health of the district has been very satisfactory in spite of war conditions. The birth rate increased and the number of still births was only slightly more than half those registered in 1942. The death rate rose slightly but was well below the national rate; more tuberculosis and infant deaths were registered than in the previous year but the rates were also lower than those of the country as a whole.

The most notable feature in connection with the notification of infectious diseases was the reduction in cases of Dysentery. Only 5 cases of Diphtheria were reported and none of the patients had been immunised; it would seem therefore that we are reaping the benefit of the vigorous Anti-diphtheria campaigns of the previous two years. At least 95% of the children of school age have been 'protected' and every effort is made to get every baby immunised before its first birthday. There was a reduction in the number of domiciliary visits but this was due to the extra work in the Clinic and partly as a result of sickness amongst the staff.

While our figures compare favourably with most neighbouring towns and districts there is still room for improvement and with this in view a Health Week was held in the Girls' Senior School in October. Addresses, illustrated by films, were given on various Health topics, e.g., Personal and Domestic Cleanliness, Food, Tuberculosis, and the Care of the Teeth; at the end of the week the pupils were asked to write an essay giving their impressions and the high standard of many of these essays showed that great interest had been aroused and valuable lessons learned. It is hoped to extend this type of work considerably when conditions are more normal.

It is a pleasure to pay a well deserved tribute to all those who have rendered assistance in the year's work - the staffs at the Health Department, the Welfare Centre, the Sanderson First Aid Post, and the lecturers who contributed to the success of the Health Week.

In conclusion I wish to thank all the members of the Council for their interest, support and encouragement.

Yours faithfully,

W.H. DICKINSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SENIOR SANITARY INSPECTOR.

To the Medical Officer of Health.

Dear Sir,

I have pleasure in submitting a short report of the work of the Department for the year ending 31st December, 1943.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Fawdon Farm drainage outlet continues to be unsatisfactory, while the slight improvement reported last year in the condition of the effluent from the City Sewage Works at Fawdon has been maintained.

COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL OF REFUSE.

The regular collection of refuse and salvage from premises throughout the district continued in a satisfactory manner during the year, although it was necessary to institute a fortnightly collection of refuse from certain premises in order to save petrol and because of labour shortage. Collection of refuse twice per week continued throughout the Coxlodge area being necessary owing to the large amount of ash and coal dross in the refuse from miners' dwellings.

Vehicles. The thorough overhauling of the vehicles of the Department during 1942 was justified by the freedom from trouble during the current year, and while some of the vehicles are becoming old they should, with care, give further valuable service.

Refuse loads were weighed at intervals of a fortnight and averages estimated from these weighings. The total amount of refuse collected from all premises (6150 in number) in the district during the year, was 5715 tons an increase of 558 tons on the estimate of the previous year. Of the quantity collected, 4782 tons were disposed of by controlled tipping at the Brunton Quarry Tip, and 933 tons were delivered to farms, market gardens and allotments, etc. This latter figure shows a considerable reduction in the amount used by farms and gardens, although the saving in transport thereby was still considerable. The average amount of refuse (excluding salvage) collected during the year was: 285.75 tons per thousand of the population and 0.929 per premises. These figures are considerably higher than last year and this despite fuel rationing and efforts to stimulate fuel economy.

There was a noticeable absence of putrescible material in the refuse which was principally composed of ash and coal dross, there being a decided increase in the amount of the latter material due to decline in the quality of coal available for household purposes.

SALVAGE.

Although there was a reduction in the amount collected, when compared with the previous year, the amount remained considerable, and the district continued to hold a high place in the Ministry's monthly returns. Nearly 580 tons of material were salvaged during the financial year ending March, 1944, the income being £1819. 2. 7d. Additional income from special refuse collected in the district was £18. 19. 6d. a considerable decrease on last due to certain removals from the district.

GENERAL INSPECTION OF PREMISES.

4584 visits were carried out during the year to premises in the district in connection with various Public Health and Housing matters. There were 390 visits made re infectious diseases and disinfections, 36 re scabies, 38 re verminous premises, 241 to various food premises, 24 in connection with service billets etc., and 97 visits of supervision etc., over refuse and salvage collection and disposal. 29 drain tests were also carried out during the year.

In connection with the above visits there were 160 informal notices served relating to 183 defects or nuisances of various kinds, while only one formal notice under the Public Health Act was found necessary, there being no statutory Housing Act notices served.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

A. DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND MILKSHOPS.

There are two cowkeepers shown on the register who are also retailers of milk, and the number of cows kept was approximately 150, the majority being those of the T.T. herd at Red House Farm, Fawdon.

As reported last year there are only two other premises in the district where milk is bottled; the only one (Red House Farm, Fawdon,) is there provided satisfactory steam sterilisation apparatus, and there remains much room for improvement in connection with the other dairies. It is hoped, when normal times return that a much higher standard will be demanded for these premises.

(i) It was not found necessary to serve any notices during the year in connection with cowkeepers premises which were maintained in quite good condition.

(ii) 68 samples of milk were taken for examination at the County Laboratory, and the following were the results:-

Test used.	Grade of Milk.	No. of samples examined.	No. found	
			satisfactory	unsatis.,
Methylene Blue Test.	Ungraded	36	22	14
	Accredited.	17	10	7
	" T.T. "	5	2	3
Plate Count.	Pasteurised.	10	10	-
B. Tuberculosis	Ungraded	15	15	-
	Accredited.	9	7	2
	"T.T."	1	1	-

Only two samples out of 25 samples examined were found positive on examination for B. tuberculosis, this being a much better result than last year.

Over 40% of the milk samples taken this year failed the Methylene Blue test, and this compares unfavourably with the 33% during 1942. I am convinced that there is room for much improvement in the transport handling and distribution of milk, while it is disturbing to be confronted by milk producers with satisfactory results of samples taken by the Ministry of Agriculture in their Advisory Scheme, when the same producer is being taken to task in connection with unsatisfactory samples taken by your Council's Health Department.

(iii) The following licences for the sale of graded milk in the district were issued:-

To sell Tuberculin Test milk	2
To sell Accredited milk	1
To sell Pasteurised milk (from vehicles)	1

B. REGISTRATION OF PREMISES (Food and Drugs Act, 1938 Section 14).

No additional registrations were granted during the year under this section and the number remained at 45. The general standard of food premises throughout the district remained good, but action was commenced during the year to deal with certain rat infestations. It is hoped that such will be reduced, if not cleared altogether, in due course.

C. SLAUGHTER HOUSE, RETAIL MEAT SHOPS etc.

The two small slaughter houses were again licensed during the year although there appears little hope of them ever being used owing to the centralisation of slaughtering generally throughout the country.

Meat distribution continued centrally from Newcastle upon Tyne and conditions in connection with the distribution appeared satisfactory. Visits were paid to all meat shops during the year, the majority being maintained in satisfactory condition. In very few cases was it necessary to remind the occupiers of the necessity for care in cleanliness and handling of their food commodities.

In connection with the condemnation of food unfit for human consumption it was possible in most cases to salvage the material for pig food or other suitable purposes, the principal items were:

100 lb. cabbage.	4 chickens.
20 X 20 lb. cauliflower.	598 canned goods.
19½ lb. bacon.	30 lb. imported beef.
39 lb. kippers.	15½ lb cheese.
28 lb. English Beef.	76 bars of chocolate.
1 cwt. beans.	81 X 2 lb. bags flour.

HOUSING.

The housing provisions of the Public Health Act were found useful for dealing with most housing conditions and no difficulty was experienced in getting the majority of defects remedied, although a number of matters were outstanding at the end of the year. No formal steps were taken in connection with overcrowding or housing, and there remains a considerable demand for dwelling houses in the district, not likely to be met for some considerable time. It is hoped to recommence regular house-to-house inspections when staff conditions will allow, as the post-war period will, in all probability, be a very busy time in housing work.

STAFF.

I wish to pay tribute once more to the loyalty of the staff, in particular to my Assistant Inspector, Mr. Liddle, who, despite advanced age continues to serve the Department faithfully, and to Mr. Smith the Cleansing Foreman.

Yours faithfully,

W. COMBEY.

Senior Sanitary Inspector,
Salvage Officer.